(d) The procedure of issue of Land Acquisition notifications has now been simplified. Earlier all the notifications under National Highways Act were vetted by the Ministry of Law. Recently, an amendment has been made in the Allocation of Business Rules by which these notifications are not required to be sent to the Ministry of Law. The Ministry of Law has approved the standard formats of various notifications keeping in view the similar nature of the notifications of Land Acquisition.

(e) To expedite the construction of Road Over Bridges, an officer of the Railways has been posted to National Highways Authority of India to coordinate with Ministry of Railways. Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with M/s IRCON International Limited for construction of some of the Road Over Bridges.

(f) Action has been taken against non-performing contractors and they are not allowed to bid for future projects unless they improve the performance in existing contracts.

(g) Steps have been taken to improve cash flow problems of contractors by granting interest bearing discretionary advance at the request of contractor, release of retention money against bank guarantee of equal amount, deferment of recovery of advances (on interest basis) and relaxation in minimum Interim Payment Certificate (IPC) amount.

Discussions with Road Safety NGOs

967. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have selected some of Road Safety NGOs for discussions;

(b) the names of such Road Safety NGOs who have been empanelled by NHAI;

(c) whether NHAI has avoided any interaction with NGOs who are active and productive;

(d) the criteria used to select such NGOs; and

(e) the steps proposed to enable NHAI to welcome constructive criticism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) National Highways Authority of India has not empanelled any Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) NHAI welcomes constructive criticism of all stake holders and ideas on road safety from various sections of society. The same may be considered for adoption on their merits and feasibility as per safety guidelines for highways.

Connecting NH with Kolkata Port

968. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question 1560 given in Rajya Sabha on 16th December, 2004 and state:

(a) whether Government have received any report from consultant; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per report received from consultant, the project for connecting NH-34 with Kolkata Port is not viable on Build Operate Transfer (Toll) basis even with maximum permissible grant of 40 per cent.

Renewal of driving license

969. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to legal discord in Section 14(2) of the Motor Vehicles act 1988, persons obtaining the